



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF LAW & PUBLIC SAFETY
DIVISION OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
BOARD OF NURSING

IN THE MATTER OF THE LICENSE OF	:	Administrative Action
	:	
	:	FINAL ORDER
	:	OF DISCIPLINE
WILLIAM T. ATKINS, R.N.	:	
License # 26NO11207900	:	
	:	
	:	
TO PRACTICE NURSING IN THE	:	
STATE OF NEW JERSEY	:	

This matter was opened to the New Jersey State Board of Nursing ("Board") upon receipt of information which the Board has reviewed and upon which the following findings of fact and conclusions of law are made:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. William T. Atkins ("Respondent") is a Registered Professional Nurse in the State of New Jersey and has been a licensee at all times relevant hereto.

2. On or about May 17, 2014, Respondent completed and submitted an online biennial renewal application which asked whether Respondent would have "completed the required continuing education credits by May 31, 2014," referring to the biennial renewal period of June 1, 2012 - May 31, 2014. Respondent was also asked whether he completed the required learning on Organ

and Tissue Donation. Respondent answered "yes" to both questions and certified the answers by submitting the online application.

3. By letter dated December 30, 2014, the Board asked Respondent to provide proof of having completed required continuing education during the last three years, which included the biennial renewal period from June 1, 2012 - May 31, 2014.

4. Respondent provided certificates of completion for four hours of continuing education within the June 1, 2012 - May 31, 2014 biennial period. Respondent also provided a list of "completions" that does not constitute valid proof of continuing education as it does not indicate that the courses were approved/accredited as continuing education for nurses (as opposed to in-service training) and does not provide contact hours awarded. Additionally, Respondent failed to submit proof of having completed the required 1 hour continuing education course on Organ and Tissue donation.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 13:37-5.3(b), nurses are required to complete a minimum of thirty (30) hours of continuing education during the preceding biennial period in order to renew their licenses. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 13:37-5.3(f), nurses are required to maintain documentation of completion of continuing

education for a period of four years after completion, and shall submit such documentation to the Board upon request.

Respondent failed to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Board, that Respondent completed the continuing education credits required for renewal during the biennial period of June 1, 2012 - May 31, 2014. The Board therefore finds Respondent in violation of N.J.A.C. 13:37-5.3(b) and 13:37-5.3(f), which in turn subjects Respondent to sanctions pursuant to N.J.S.A. 45:1-21(e) and (h).

Respondent's use of dishonesty and misrepresentation during the license renewal process in falsifying his continuing education information constitutes a violation of N.J.S.A. 45:1-21(b), subjecting Respondent to sanctions.

Based on the foregoing findings and conclusions, a Provisional Order of Discipline was entered on September 8, 2015, provisionally suspending respondent's nursing license and imposing a reprimand and a \$250 civil penalty. A copy of the Order was served upon the respondent by certified and regular mail at his address of record. The Provisional Order was subject to finalization by the Board at 5:00 p.m. on the 30th day following entry unless respondent requested a modification or dismissal of the stated Findings of Fact or Conclusions of Law by submitting a written request for modification or dismissal setting forth in writing any and all reasons why said findings

and conclusions should be modified or dismissed and submitting any and all documents or other written evidence supporting respondent's request for consideration and reasons therefor.

Mr. Atkins replied to the Provisional order, and has remedied the deficiency with respect to continuing education for the 2012-2014 licensing cycle by submitting documentation of a total of 15.5 contact hours of continuing education that was timely completed for the cycle, along with 22.20 contact hours of continuing education completed in 2015. Mr. Atkins has therefore belatedly satisfied his continuing education obligation for the 2012-2014 cycle, and suspension is no longer applicable. However, as respondent failed to timely complete his obligation for that cycle, the findings of a violation of N.J.A.C. 13:37-5.3 (failure to timely complete CE) and N.J.S.A. 45:1-21(b) (misrepresentation on the 2014 renewal application with regard to continuing education) are warranted. Therefore the Board found that finalization of the Provisional Order, imposing the reprimand and \$250 civil penalty, was warranted.

ACCORDINGLY, IT IS on this 8th day of December, 2015,

ORDERED that:

1. Continuing education hours taken currently and applied to cure the deficiency from the previous biennial period shall not also be used to satisfy the requirements of the current biennial period. Thus only 7.2 of the contact hours of

continuing education completed in November of 2015 may be applied towards respondent's obligation for the 2014-2016 licensing cycle.

2. A reprimand is imposed on Respondent for falsifying the continuing education information on his license renewal application.

3. Respondent is assessed a civil penalty in the amount of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) for failing to timely complete required continuing education. Payment shall be made by certified check, bank cashier check, or money order payable to "State of New Jersey," or by wire transfer, direct deposit, or credit card payment delivered or mailed to Leslie Burgos, Board Staff, State Board of Nursing, P.O. Box 45010, Newark, New Jersey 07101. Any other form of payment will be rejected and will be returned to the party making the payment. Payment shall be made no later than fifteen (15) days after the date of filing of this order. In the event Respondent fails to make a timely payment, a certificate of debt shall be filed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 45:1-24 and the Board may bring such other proceedings as authorized by law.

NEW JERSEY STATE BOARD OF NURSING

By:

Patricia Murphy PhD APN

Patricia Murphy, PhD, APN
Board President